



Melvin Brewing accepts its award at the Great American Beer Festival.
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WINNING BREWS

Local Beer Makers Bring Home Honors

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THE CROWD OF BREWERS CHEERED AS REPRESENTATIVES FROM TWO JACKSON BREWERIES TOOK THE STAGE TO COLLECT AWARDS AT THE GREAT AMERICAN BEER FESTIVAL (GABF) HELD IN DENVER, COLORADO, IN OCTOBER.

Melvin Brewing earned gold in the “Fresh or Wet Hop Ale” category for its Melvin IPA, while Snake River Brewing brought home a silver for the Kelly Alt—an unfiltered alt beer that locals know as “Old Keller”—in the “Kellerbier or Zwickelbier” category.

“It’s the best feeling in the world for brewers,” says Chris Erickson, director of brewery operations at Snake River Brewing. “You’re recognized by your peers in the industry, who make up the judging panel, as one of the finest beers in the country.”

Judges evaluated over 7,200 beers and awarded 286 medals at the 2016 awards. Wyoming was the state with the highest ratio of medals to entries, with 45 entries bringing home five medals.

Over the past 22 years, Snake River Brewing has received 34 GABF medals. In 2015, Melvin Brewing earned the Small Brewpub and Small Brewpub Brewer of the Year award, as well as a bronze for Melvin IPA.

This year’s fresh hop winner, Melvin IPA, required a bit of maneuvering to get the ingredients together in time.

“It’s a fresh hop beer, so the hops get picked off the vine in Colorado and do not go through the normal palletization process,” says Melvin Brewing co-founder Jeremy Tofte. “They get to us within 24 hours of being picked.”

To meet the 24-hour deadline, drivers brought the hops from Colorado straight to the brewery, beginning production right at 3 a.m. when they arrived.

“It’s always fun to figure out how to get fresh hops to middle-of-nowhere Wyoming,” Tofte says.

Teamwork and inventiveness help local breweries bring home the medals, but quality is the biggest factor.

“Wyoming has 13 breweries out of 4,600 in the country,” Tofte says. “I guess it’s quality over quantity.” ■

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